

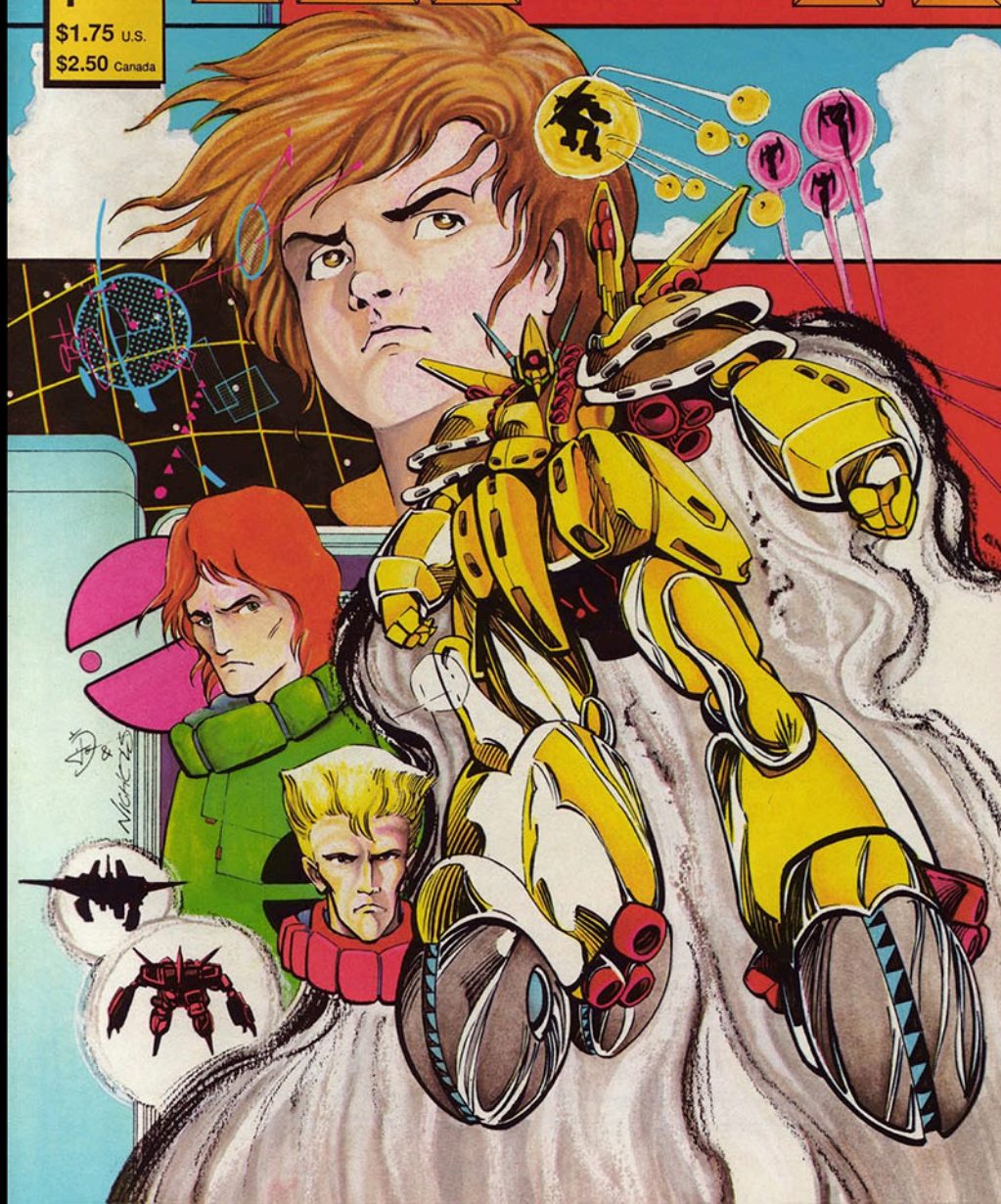


DARK
HORSE
COLOR
COMICS

1

\$1.75 u.s.
\$2.50 Canada

MECHA



First Contact

It's funny the way things come together; the way circumstances will align themselves; the way just the right person with just the right talents will pop up at just the right...well, you get the idea. Take the book you hold in your hands for instance. Mecha might be nothing more than an idea and a couple pages of notes if Mike Richardson hadn't decided the time was right to start Dark Horse; if he hadn't offered me the job as editor; if I hadn't met artist Harrison Fong at last year's San Diego Con; if my friends Mark Badger and Chris Warner hadn't introduced me to inker Art Nichols; if letterer John Workman hadn't been so willing to work the book into his schedule; if colorist Steve Mattsson hadn't moved back to town from Los Angeles. Certainly, if any one of these events had not occurred when they did MECHA would not be the book it is -- and I can only imagine that it would be less than it is for the omission of any of those talented people. They each have my thanks.

That out of the way, I just have a few words of introduction to this new series, then you can go on to the story itself. "Mecha" (or *meka*, according to Frederick L. Schodt in *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*) is a Japanese slang term for the many mechanical constructs that populate Japanese comics and animation, and it seemed a fitting title for a book that owes so much to TV series and movies such as *Macross*, *Dunbine*, *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Orguss*.

What the Mecha are is fairly simple: Huge humanoid-shaped machines, driven in much the same way one would drive a car (or tank) or pilot a plane (or spaceship). What their purpose is here on Earth, and where they come from are the underlying

mysteries of the story. Future issues reveal the answers to the questions raised by the appearance of the Mecha, but right now I suggest you hang on -- we've got two years and most of the world to cover in the next twenty-eight pages.

Welcome aboard!

Randy Stradley

MECHA #1 June, 1987. Published bi-monthly by Dark Horse Comics Publishing Co., 3376 N.E. Sandy Blvd., Portland, Oregon 97232-1927. All prominent characters are TM and © 1987 Dark Horse Comics. All rights reserved. "Mecha" designs © 1987 Harrison Fong. Any similarity between any of the names, characters, persons or institutions and those of any person living or dead or institution is purely coincidental. Six issue subscription \$11.70 U.S., \$15.00 foreign.

Next Issue:

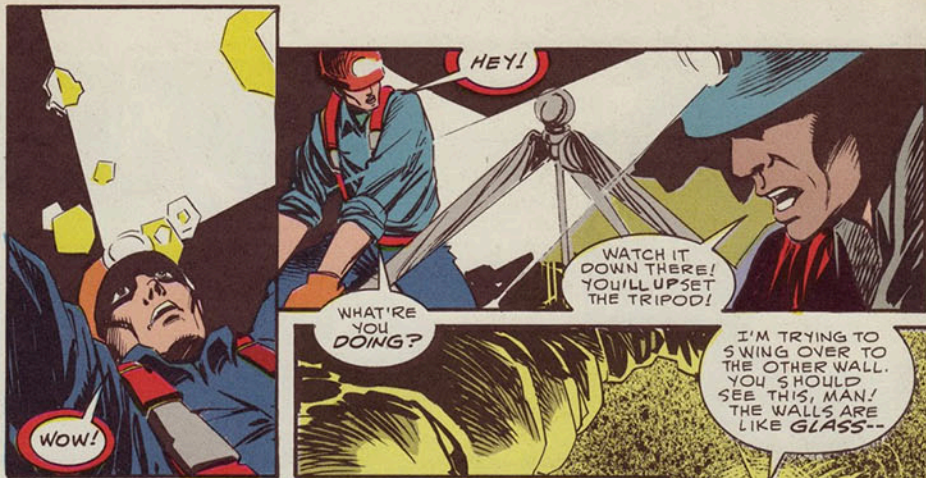


In space, a lone Mecha rider goes toe-to-toe with the enemy. Meanwhile, here on Earth, Hyer is disturbed to find himself "On the Inside, Looking Out." Be here in sixty days for more excitement!



FIRST CONTACT

SCRIPT: RANDY STRADLEY • PENCILS: HARRISON FONG • INKS: ART NICHOLS
 COLORS: STEVE MATTSSON • LETTERS: JOHN WORKMAN
 CREATED BY MIKE RICHARDSON AND RANDY STRADLEY • MECHA DESIGNS BY HARRISON FONG



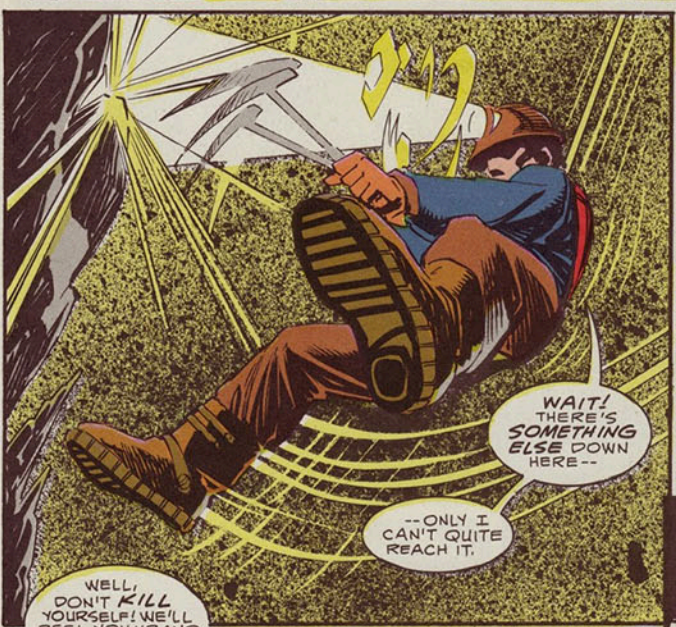
HEY!

WATCH IT DOWN THERE! YOU'LL UPSET THE TRIPOD!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

Wow!

I'M TRYING TO SWING OVER TO THE OTHER WALL. YOU SHOULD SEE THIS, MAN! THE WALLS ARE LIKE GLASS--



WAIT! THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE DOWN HERE--

--ONLY I CAN'T QUITE REACH IT.

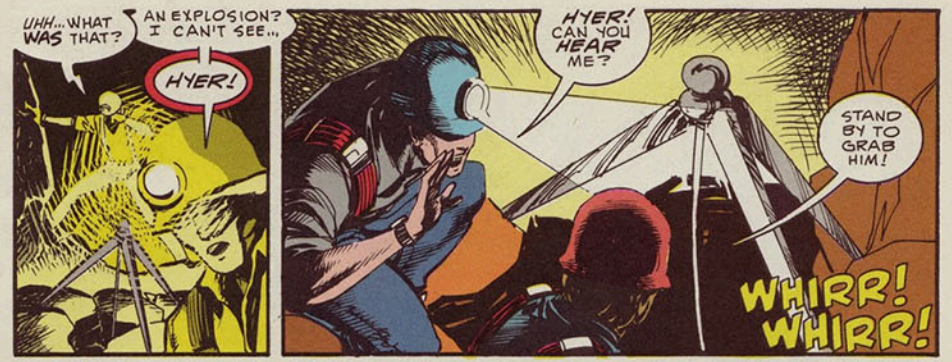
WELL, DON'T KILL YOURSELF! WE'LL REEL YOU UP AND REPOSITION THE WINCH.



LIKE THIS SHAFT WAS MELTED INTO...



NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT. I THINK I CAN GRAB ON TO IT ON THIS PASS--



UHH... WHAT WAS THAT?

AN EXPLOSION? I CAN'T SEE...

HYER!

HYER! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

STAND BY TO GRAB HIM!

WHIRR! WHIRR!



BUT... HE'S NOT HERE...

RUMBLE

CAVE-IN!

RUN FOR IT!



BUT HIER'S STILL DOWN THERE!

YEAH, BUT WE WON'T DO HIM ANY GOOD IF WE GET TRAPPED OURSELVES!

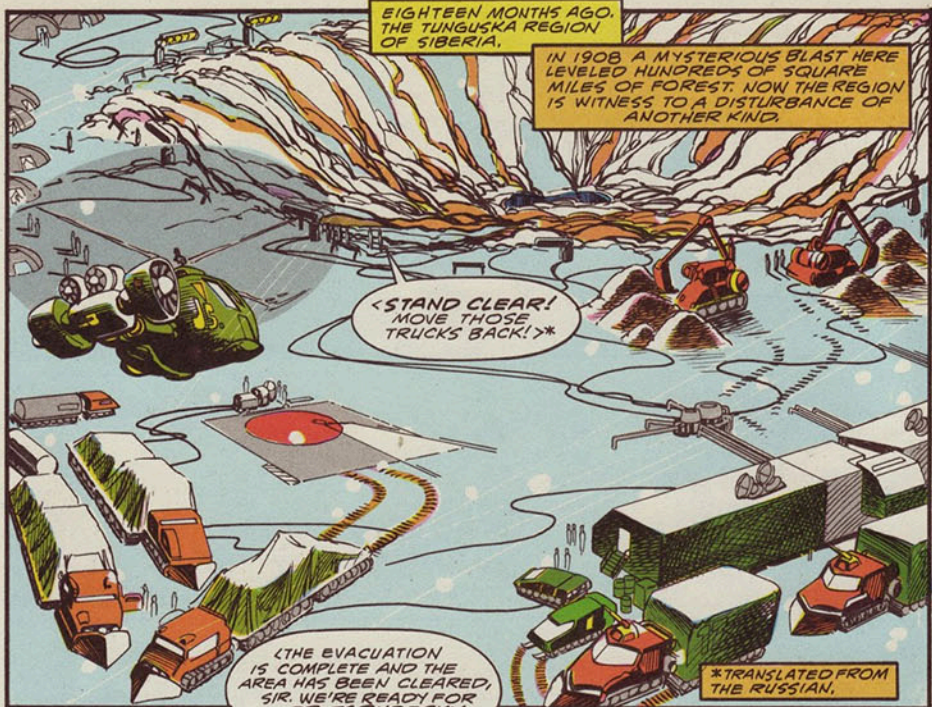
RUMBLE!



MADE IT! WE'RE SA--

Wooooon!

HOLY...



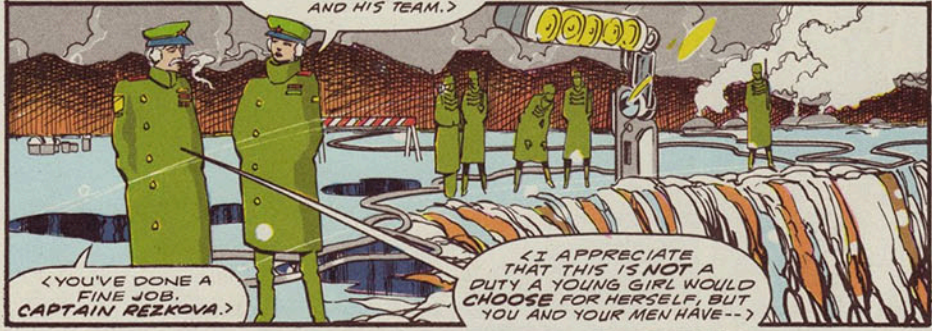
EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, THE TUNGUSKA REGION OF SIBERIA.

IN 1908 A MYSTERIOUS BLAST HERE LEVELLED HUNDREDS OF SQUARE MILES OF FOREST. NOW THE REGION IS WITNESS TO A DISTURBANCE OF ANOTHER KIND.

<STAND CLEAR! MOVE THOSE TRUCKS BACK!>*

*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN.

<THE EVACUATION IS COMPLETE AND THE AREA HAS BEEN CLEARED, SIR. WE'RE READY FOR DR. TARNOFSKY AND HIS TEAM.>



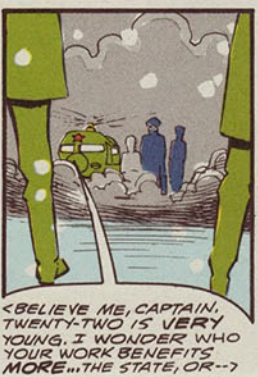
<YOU'VE DONE A FINE JOB, CAPTAIN REZKOVA.>

<I APPRECIATE THAT THIS IS NOT A DUTY A YOUNG GIRL WOULD CHOOSE FOR HERSELF, BUT YOU AND YOUR MEN HAVE-->

<I AM NOT SO YOUNG, COLONEL. I AM NEARLY TWENTY-TWO-->



<--AND PROUD TO DO MY DUTY FOR THE STATE.>



<BELIEVE ME, CAPTAIN, TWENTY-TWO IS VERY YOUNG. I WONDER WHO YOUR WORK BENEFITS MORE...THE STATE, OR-->



<FINISHED THIS MORNING, DOCTOR.>

<--DR. TARNOFSKY.>

<THE WORK IS COMPLETED, COLONEL?>



<AH, YES, UH, CAPTAIN, AND THE FINAL WORK?>

<ALL DONE WITH HIGH PRESSURE HOSES, AS PER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. THERE HAS BEEN NO HUMAN CONTACT WITH THE OBJECT.>

<THEN YOU ARE DISMISSED, CAPTAIN. YOUR WORK HERE IS FINISHED-->



<--WHILE MINE IS JUST BEGINNING.>

<THIS WAY, DOCTOR, THERE IS A PATHWAY DOWN...>



OH!!!



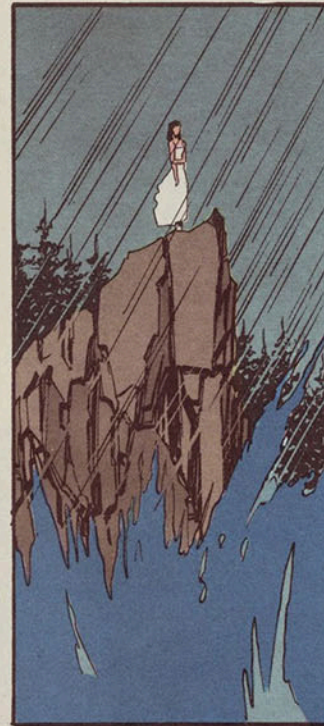
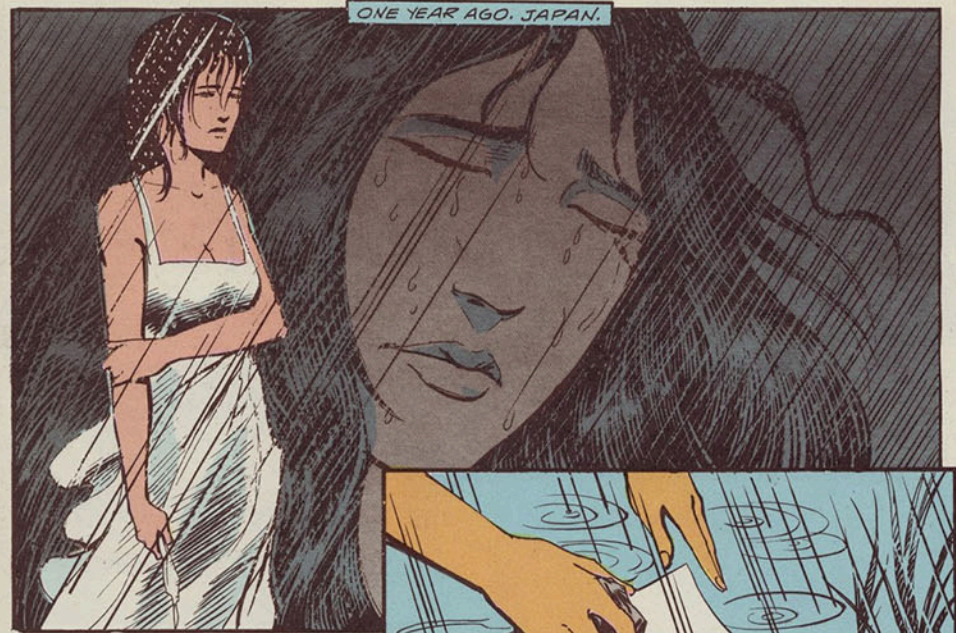
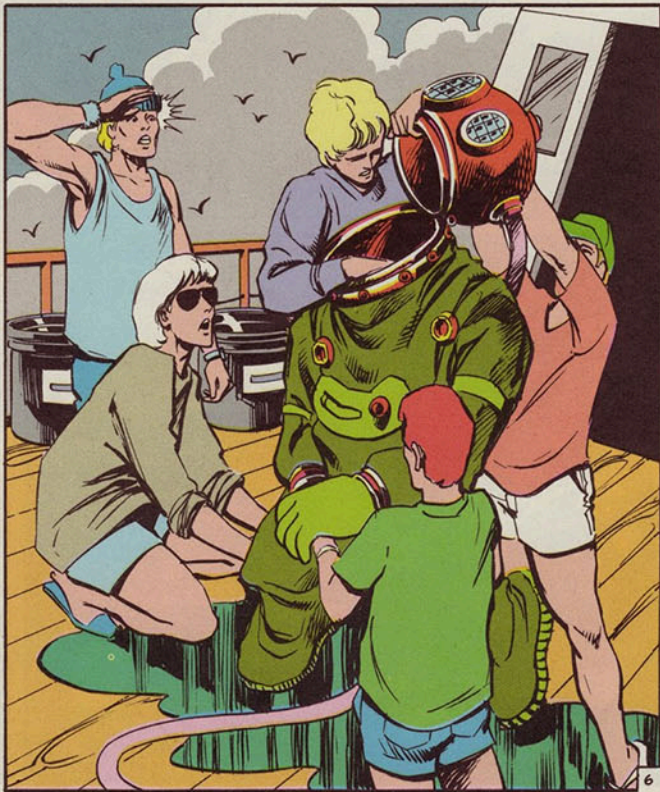
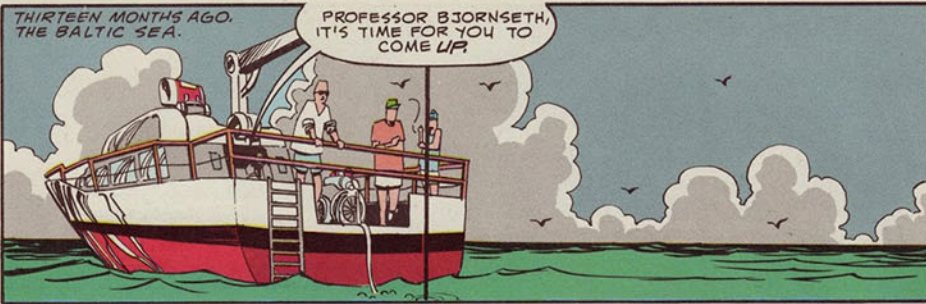
OOOF!



<CAPTAIN REZKOVA!>

<NO! DO NOT TOUCH IT!>





FIVE MONTHS AGO.
CALIFORNIA.

EVERYTHING'S SECURE, COLONEL MEREK! THE PERIMETER IS LOCKED DOWN AND THE MEDIA IS REPORTING THE TREMORS AS JUST ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SCANNER TEAMS?

THEY HAVE READINGS THAT MATCH THOSE OF THE BALTIC SEA AND JAPANESE EVENTS--EXACTLY.

ONLY THIS TIME IT'S OURS. ALERT ALL UNITS THAT WE HAVE A GREEN LIGHT.

BE COOL, KEENE. YOU GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT--

I'M NOT WORRIED, HYER.

OH. WELL...

THEN I GUESS I SHOULD WISH YOU GOOD LUCK, MAN.

I DON'T NEED LUCK EITHER.

SHOWTIME, KEENE!

IF YOU DID IT, IT'LL BE A CAKEWALK FOR ME.

OKAY, SON. JUST LIKE WE DISCUSSED.

AREN'T YOU WORRIED HE'LL GET BIT BY A RATTLESNAKE OR A GILA MONSTER OR SOMETHING?

AFTER THAT BLAST? YOU KIDDING?

NO... HOPING.

HOW'RE YOU DOING, SON?

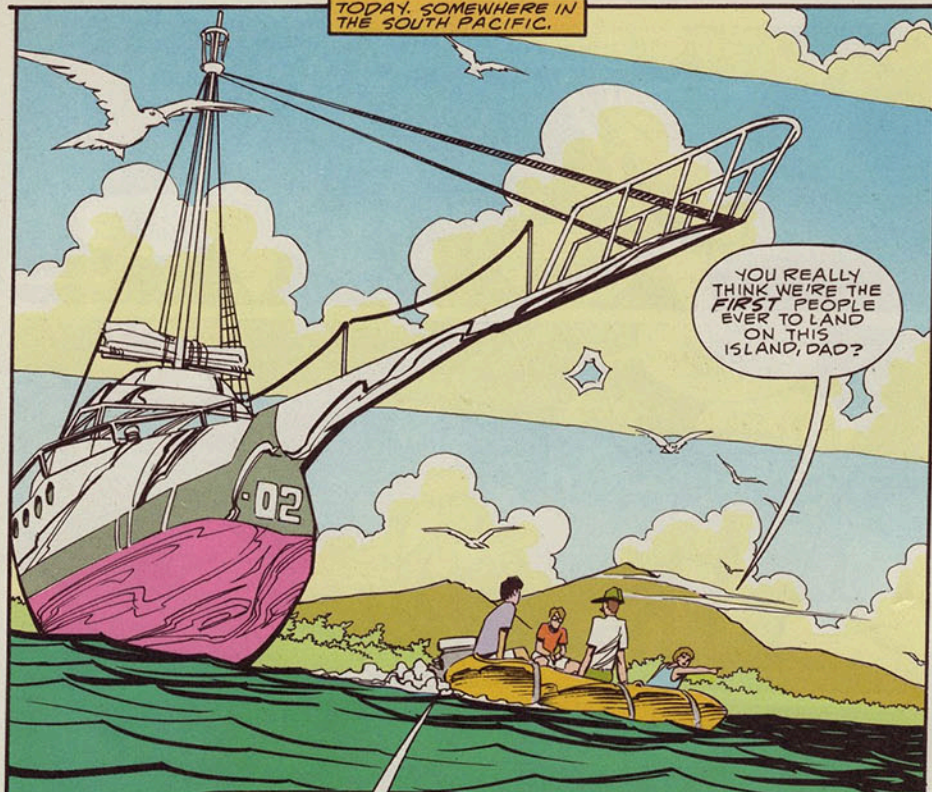
I'M FINE BUT EVERYTHING OUT HERE IS SCORCHED... BURNT RIGHT OFF AT GROUND LEVEL. NO SIGN OF THE TARGET YET--

WAIT! THERE IT IS!

IT'S BIGGER ... DIFFERENT FROM HYER'S. I'M RIGHT UNDER IT. I'M GOING TO TOUCH--

BINGO.

TODAY, SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC.



YOU REALLY THINK WE'RE THE FIRST PEOPLE EVER TO LAND ON THIS ISLAND, DAD?

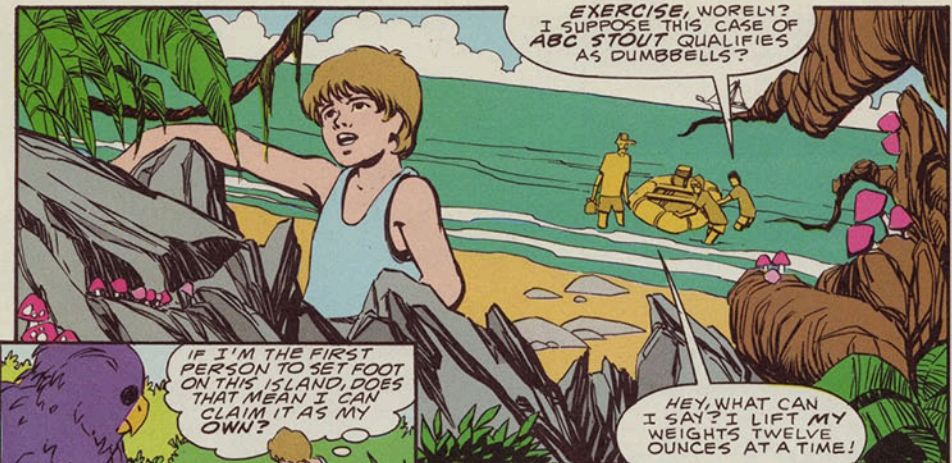
I'D ALMOST GUARANTEE IT, TERRY. WE'RE WAY OUT OF ANY OF THE MAJOR OCEAN CURRENTS. THE CHANCES OF EVEN ANCIENT POLYNESIAN SAILORS COMING THIS FAR SOUTH ARE PRETTY SLIM.

YAHOO! I'M GONNA BE THE FIRST PERSON TO CLIMB THE HILL!

TERRY! WAIT!

RELAX, JACK. TERRY CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.

CHANG'S RIGHT. LET THE KID RUN. HELL, AFTER FIVE WEEKS COOPED UP ON THAT TUB OF YOURS, I COULD USE SOME EXERCISE MYSELF!



EXERCISE, WORELY? I SUPPOSE THIS CASE OF ABC STOUT QUALIFIES AS DUMBBELLS?

IF I'M THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON THIS ISLAND, DOES THAT MEAN I CAN CLAIM IT AS MY OWN?

HEY, WHAT CAN I SAY? I LIFT MY WEIGHTS TWELVE OUNCES AT A TIME!



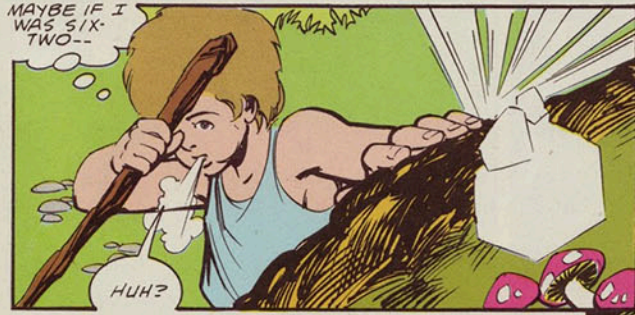
KING TERRY THE FIRST! THE RULER OF ALL I SURVEY!



KING TERRY, THE MIGHTIEST OF WARRIORS! NONE OF MY ENEMIES CAN STAND AGAINST ME!



YEAH, SURE...

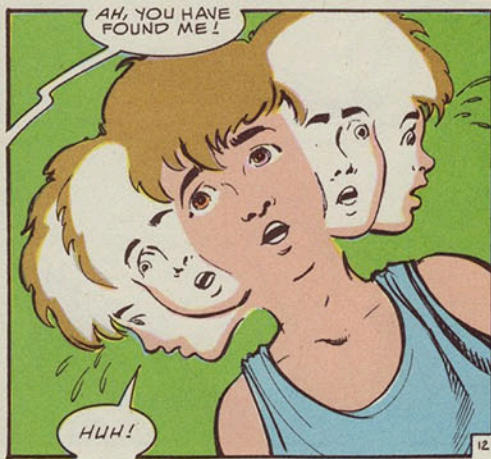
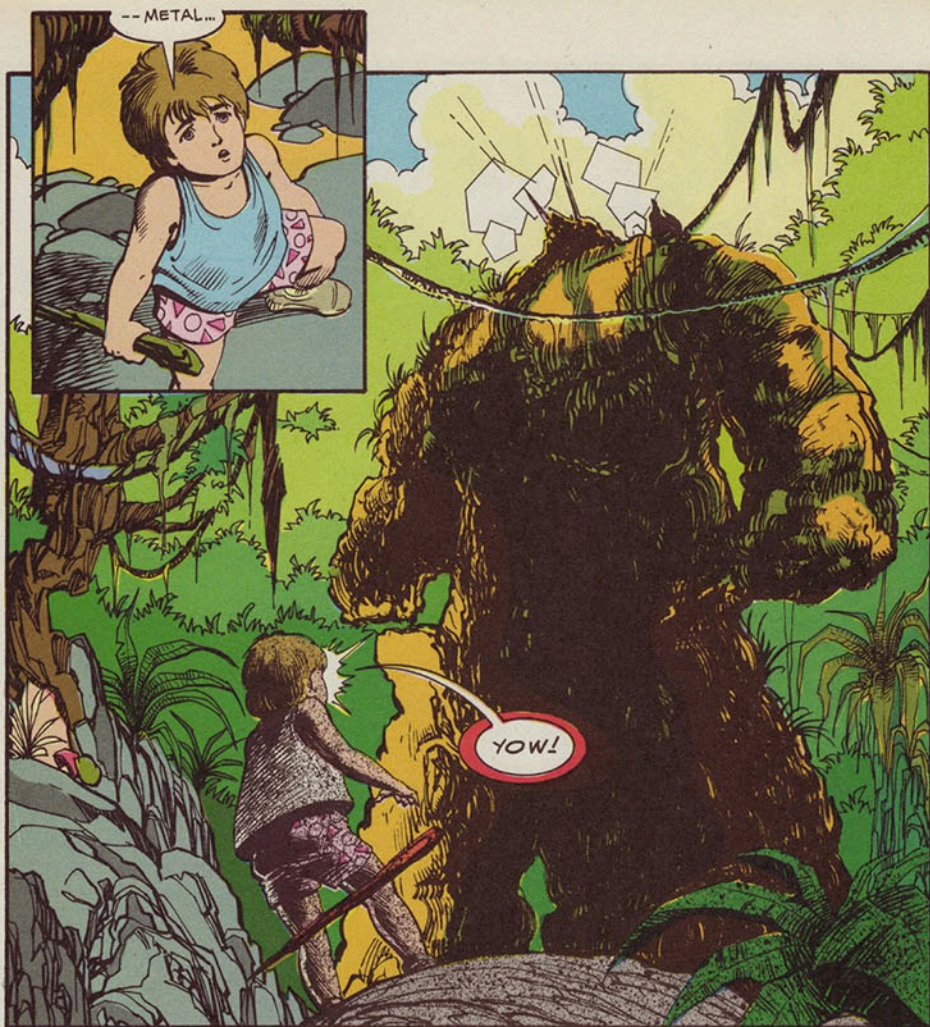


MAYBE IF I WAS SIX-TWO--

HUH?



THIS ROCK IS--



I HAD MISTAKEN MYSELF-- MY DREAM-SELF-- FOR AN ENEMY! HAH! LUCKY WAS I THAT MY DREAM-SELF KNEW BETTER! FOR AS YOU CAN SEE--



HE IS MUCH LARGER THAN I! HAH-HAH-HAH!



UH, RIGHT...

MY DREAM-SELF KNEW TO BRING ME HERE, AND HE TOLD ME TO WAIT...



THIS IS A STRANGE ALTIJIRINGA, DREAM-TIME, AND SOMETIMES IT IS A LONELY ONE, BUT I AM PATIENT.

MY DREAM-SELF SAYS SOMEONE WILL COME. HE GIVES ME THE WORDS TO SPEAK THIS TONGUE, AND NOW YOU ARE HERE, NOW THE DREAM IS ALMOST OVER.



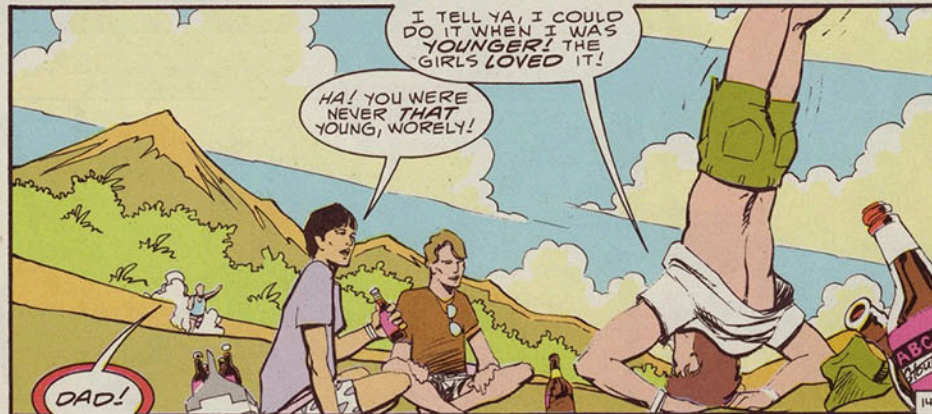
O-OVER?

YES, THEN IT WILL BE YOUR DREAM--



AND I CAN WAKE UP...

...AND BE A YOUNG MAN AGAIN!



I TELL YA, I COULD DO IT WHEN I WAS YOUNGER! THE GIRLS LOVED IT!

HA! YOU WERE NEVER THAT YOUNG, WORELY!

DAD!



DAD! YOU GOTTA SEE THIS!

WHAT IS IT, TERRY?

WHOOOA!



YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT, DAD! THERE'S SOMEONE HERE!

WHAT? SLOW DOWN! WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "SOMEONE'S HERE"? ANOTHER SHIP?

OOF!

WHUMP!



NO! NOT ANOTHER SHIP-- AN OLD MAN. I THINK HE'S AN ABORIGINE, YOU KNOW...

...LIKE YOUR FRIEND, WALAGONG IN AUSTRALIA!



AN ABORIGINE? HERE?

YEAH! AND HE'S GOT THIS COOL METAL STATUE THAT'S A HUNDRED FEET HIGH--

...A HUNDRED FEET HIGH?



WELL, TWENTY-FIVE, AT LEAST--

BUT HE SAYS IT'S HIS "DREAM-SELF," ONLY THE DREAM IS ABOUT TO END AND THEN IT WILL BE MY DREAM--

OKAY, ENOUGH. I WON'T EVEN PRE-TEND TO UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS, BUT I'M WILLING TO TAKE A LOOK.



GREAT! THIS WAY!

COME ON, WORELY! MOVE THOSE OLD BONES!

HUFF!

ELSEWHERE, AN INTRUDER, A
BLAZING SPHERE OF LIGHT,
LIKE THE SEED OF A RAMPANT
SUN, CHARGES EARTHWARD--

--MYSTERIOUSLY UNDETECTED
BY EVEN THE MOST SOPHISTI-
CATED SPY SATELLITES.

THE SCREAM
BUILDS IN
INTENSITY--

THE INTRUDER HITS
THE ATMOSPHERE
SCREAMING.

--BECOMING
A ROAR...

...THE ROAR OF A WILD
BEAST ABOUT TO STRIKE.

AND SOMEWHERE, IN THE VAST,
COLD GULF BETWEEN WORLDS, AN
ECHO OF THAT ROAR IS DETECTED
...ANALYZED... INTERPRETED:

"PREY!"

EVER SEEN
ANYTHING
LIKE IT,
CHANG?

NEVER!
NOT EVEN IN
ANGKOR!

TOLD
YA!

JACK, LOOK AT THIS! IF I DIDN'T
KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY THIS THING IS
FULLY JOINTED--BUILT TO MOVE!

BUT IT HAS
OBVIOUSLY
BEEN HERE
FOR YEARS! WHO
COULD HAVE--

THERE'S THE OLD
MAN I TOLD YOU
ABOUT!

I BROUGHT MY
DAD! TELL HIM
ABOUT THE
DREAM!

MY NAME IS
JACK PIERCE.
MY SON
TELLS ME--

THE
DREAM
IS OVER.

THIS
IS WHERE
IT ENDS.



RRRROAR!

WHA--?

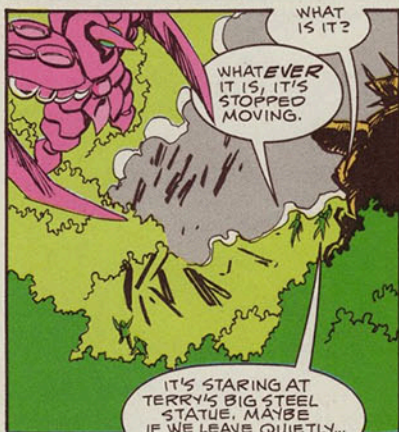
THAT SOUNDS LIKE--

INCOMING!



SKRAAK!

OH CRIPES...



WHAT IS IT?

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S STOPPED MOVING.

IT'S STARING AT TERRY'S BIG STEEL STATUE, MAYBE IF WE LEAVE QUIETLY...



NO!

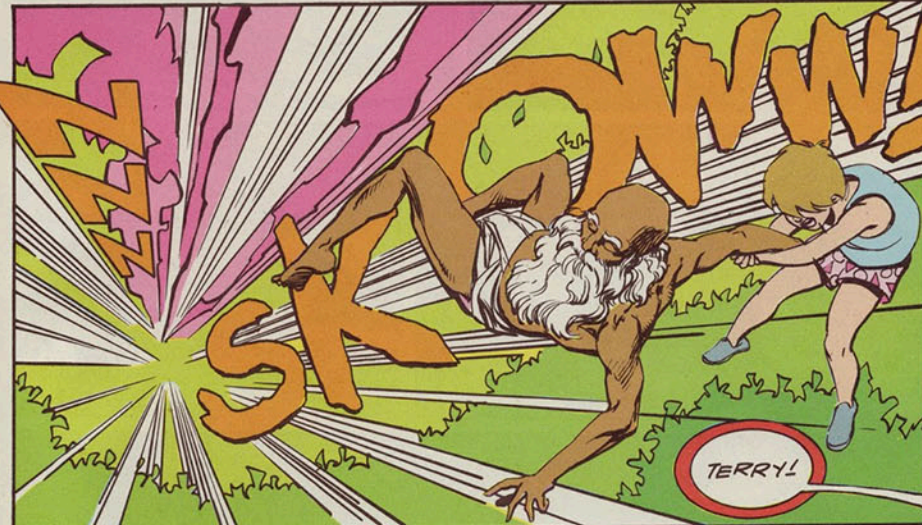
SHHH! I THINK YOU'RE MAKING IT MAD!

NO! I HAVE DREAMED IN SILENCE FOR MANY SEASONS, NOW THAT THE DREAM IS ENDING--



--I WILL AWAKE WITH A SHOUT!

NO! WAIT... DON'T!



SKOWW!

TERRY!



WUMPI!

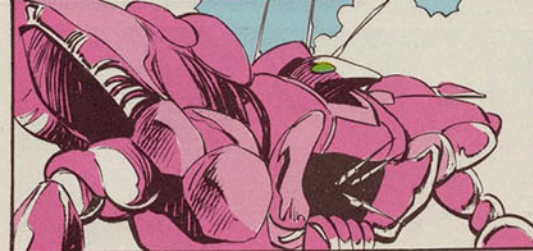


TERRY! LET ME GO, CHANG! HE'S HURT!

NO, JACK! IT'S NOT OVER! THAT THING'S DOING SOMETHING ELSE!

WITH A REPTILIAN HISS, LACQUERED STEEL PETAL'S BLOSSOM OUTWARD FROM THE INTRUDER'S CHEST...

...REVEALING A STAMEN THAT FILLS THE AIR WITH A HIGH-PITCHED HUM--



--THIS TIME SENDING MORE THAN JUST AN ECHO INTO THE VOID.

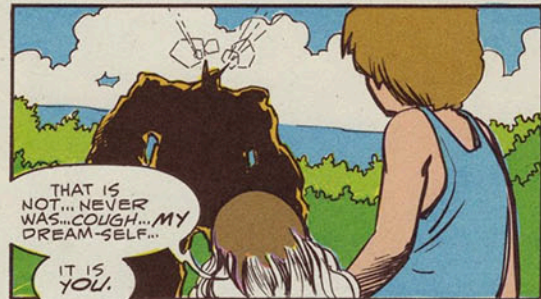


UHH... WHA--? OH, NO!

MISTER, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



IT SEEMS I WAS ... COUGH... MISTAKEN, YOUNG WARRIOR, ALTJIRINGA... DREAM-TIME, HAS PLAYED TRICKS WITH ME...



THAT IS NOT... NEVER WAS... COUGH... MY DREAM-SELF...

IT IS YOU.



ME? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

I UNDERSTAND ... COUGH... NOW, I HAVE WASTED MY YOUTH ON A DREAM OF A DREAM...

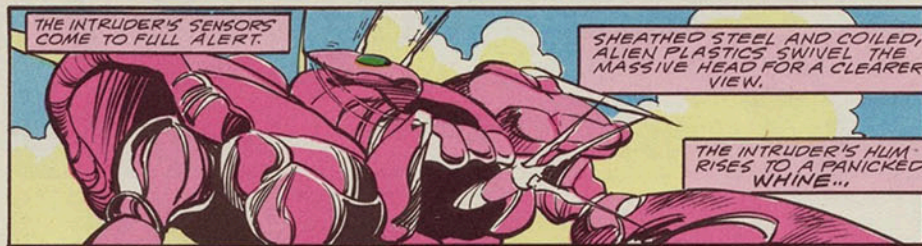
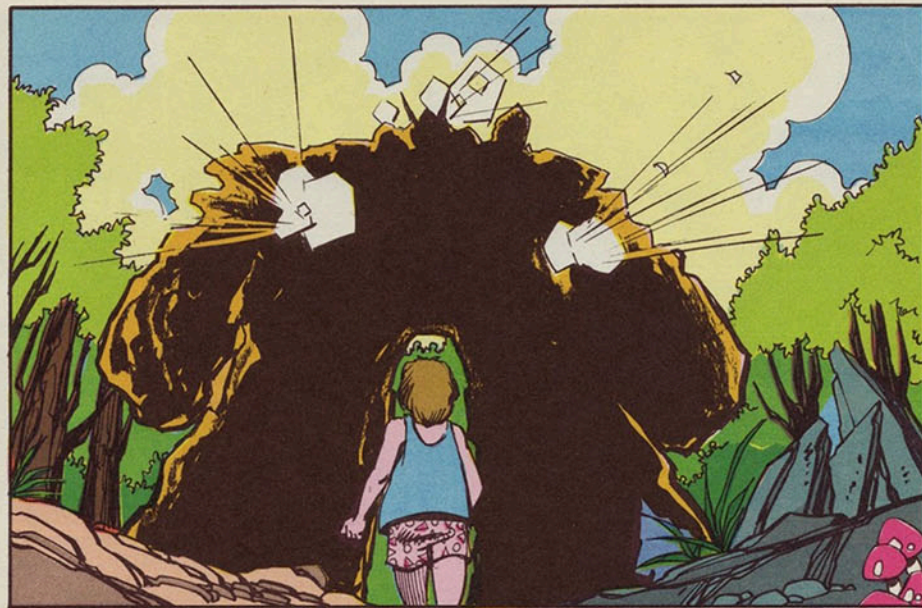


BE WISER THAN I WARRIOR, EMBRACE YOUR DESTINY... COUGH...

ACCEPT A WARRIOR'S MANTLE... MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE...



TERRY! RUN! GET AWAY FROM THERE!



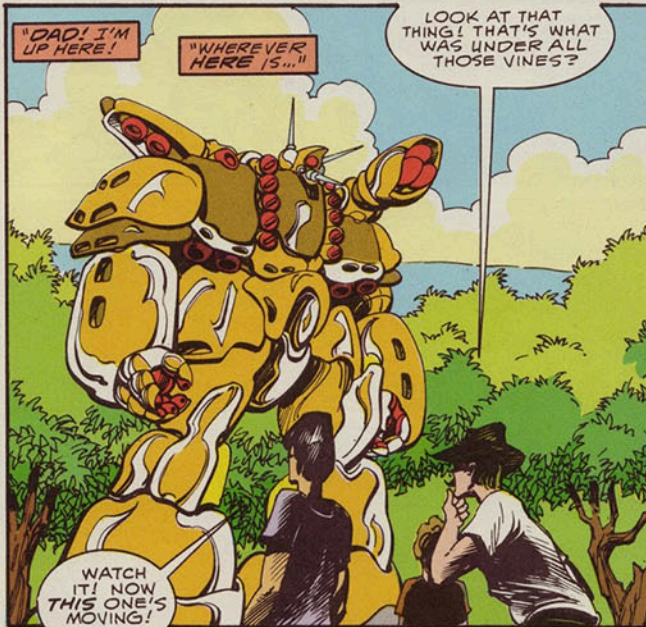
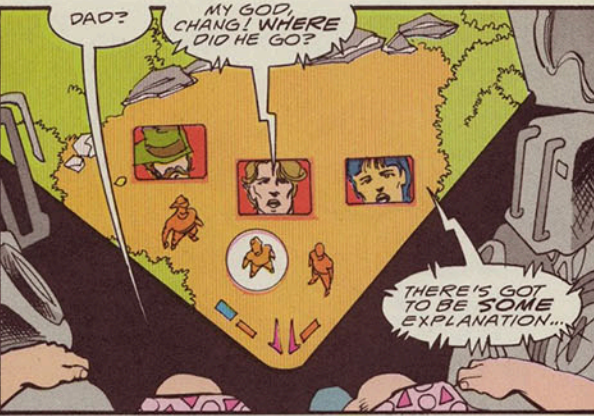
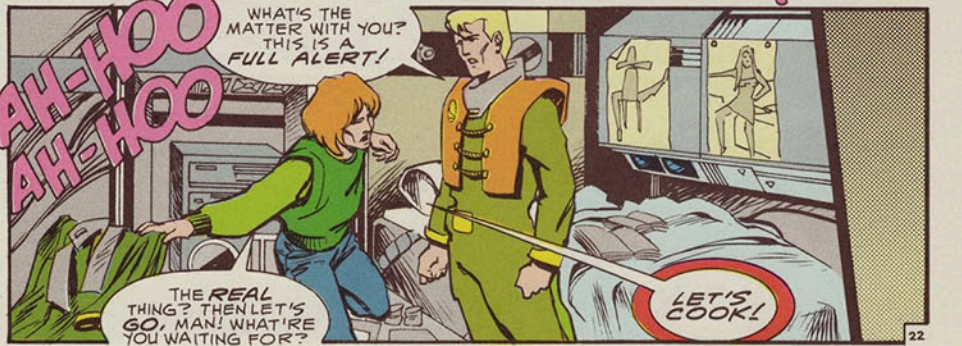
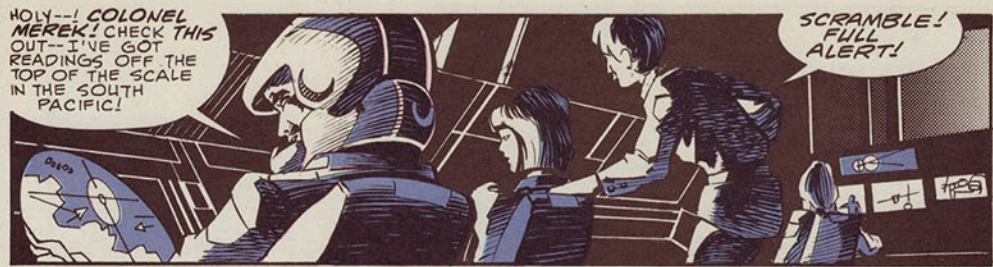
THE INTRUDER'S SENSORS COME TO FULL ALERT.

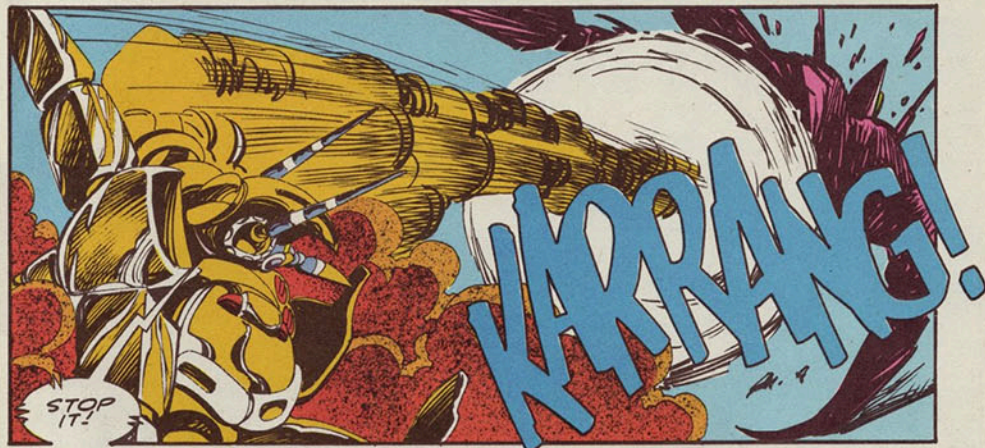
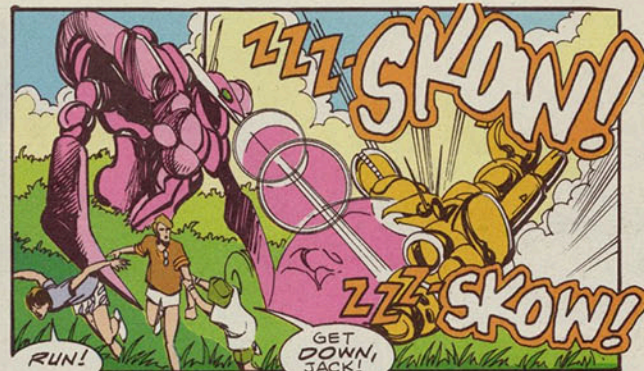
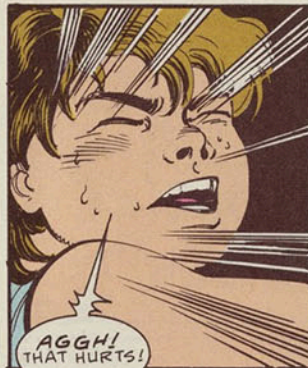
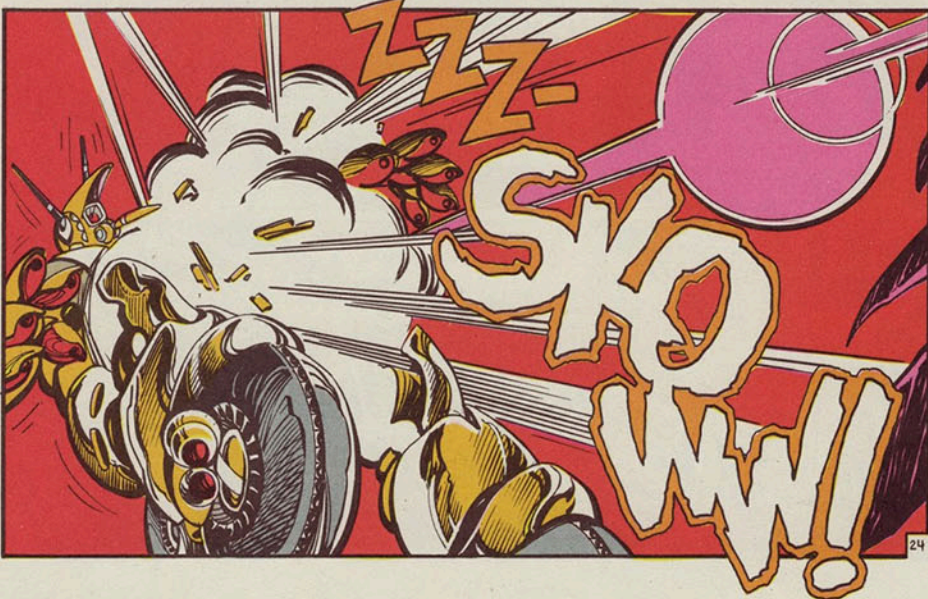
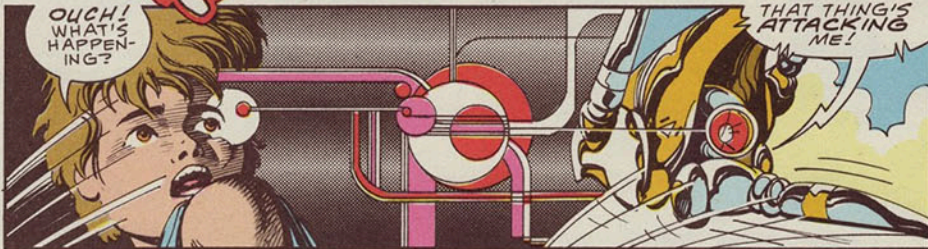
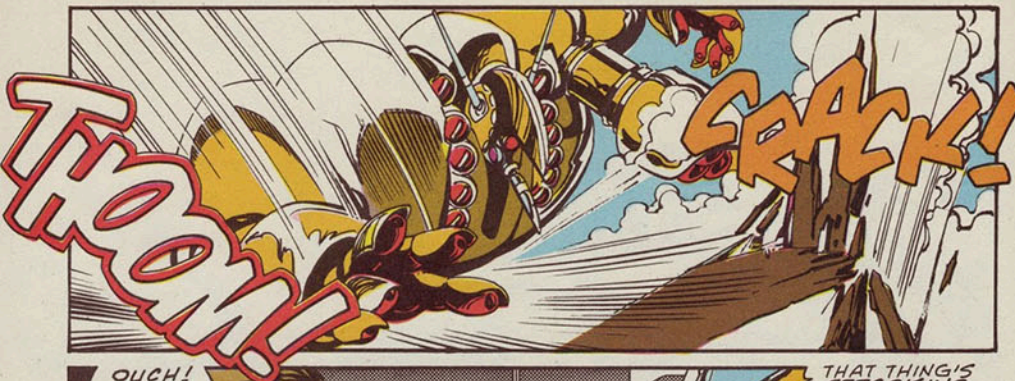
SHEATHED STEEL AND COILED, ALIEN PLASTICS SWIVEL THE MASSIVE HEAD FOR A CLEARER VIEW.

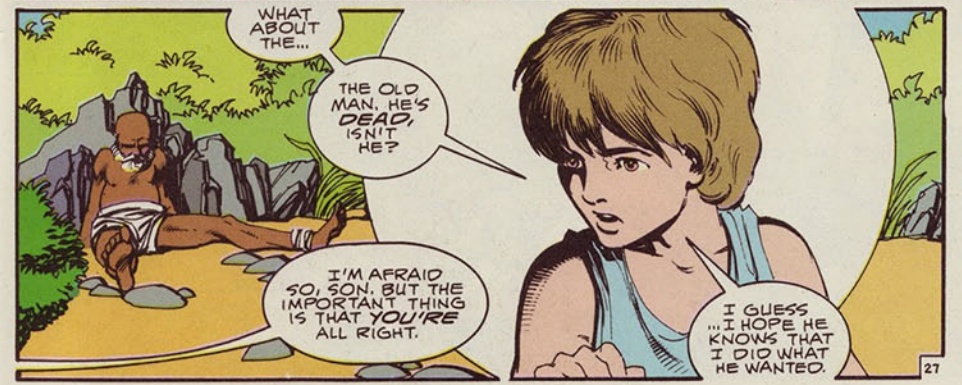
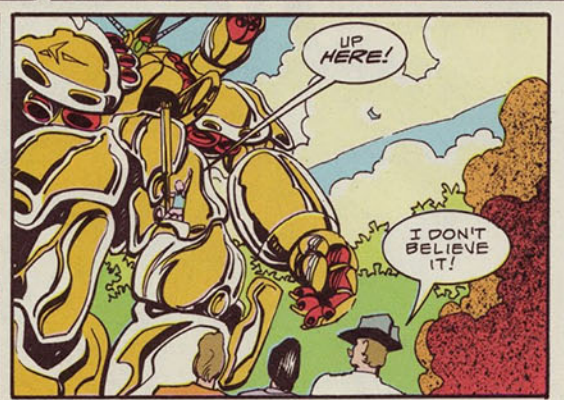
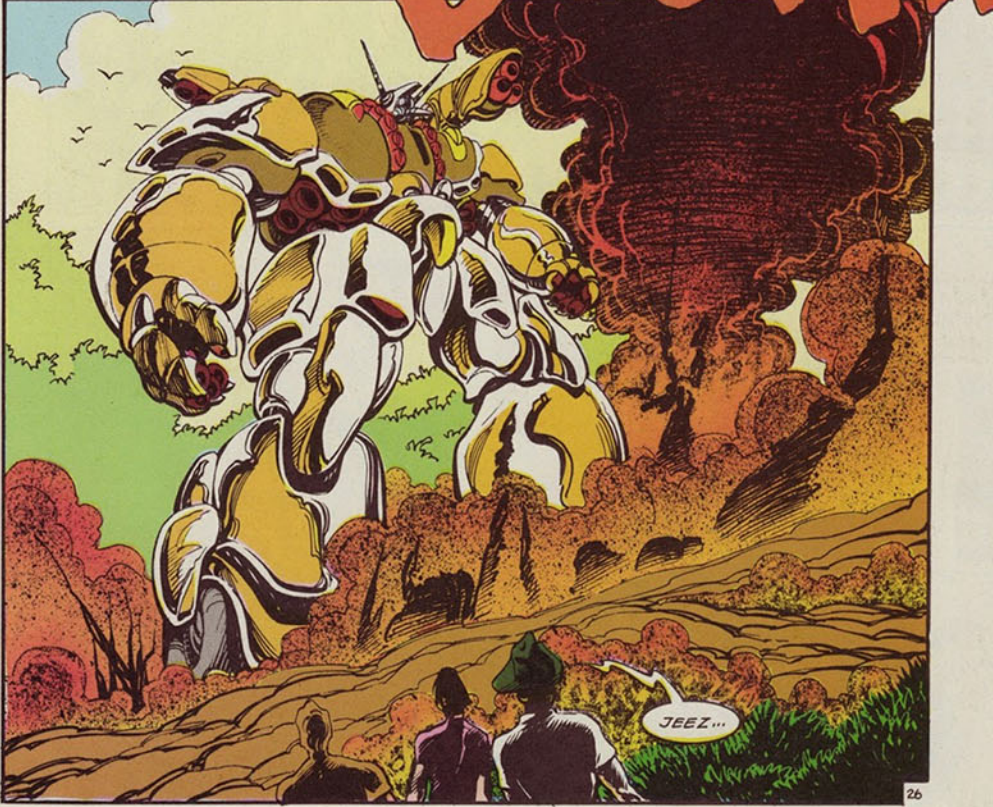
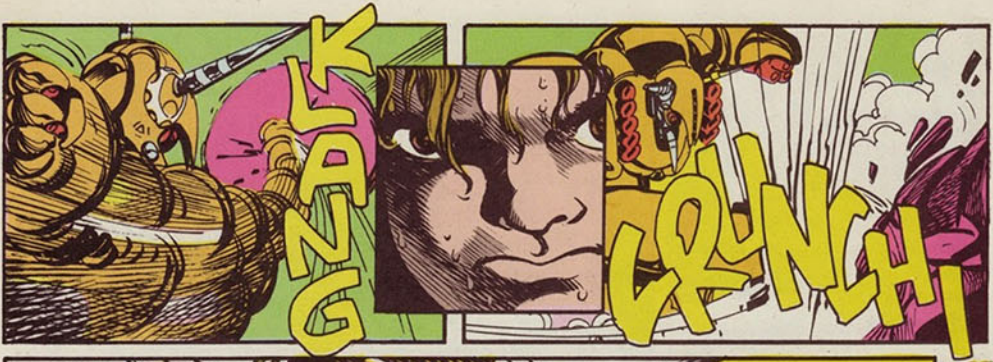
THE INTRUDER'S HUM-RISES TO A PANICKED WHINE...

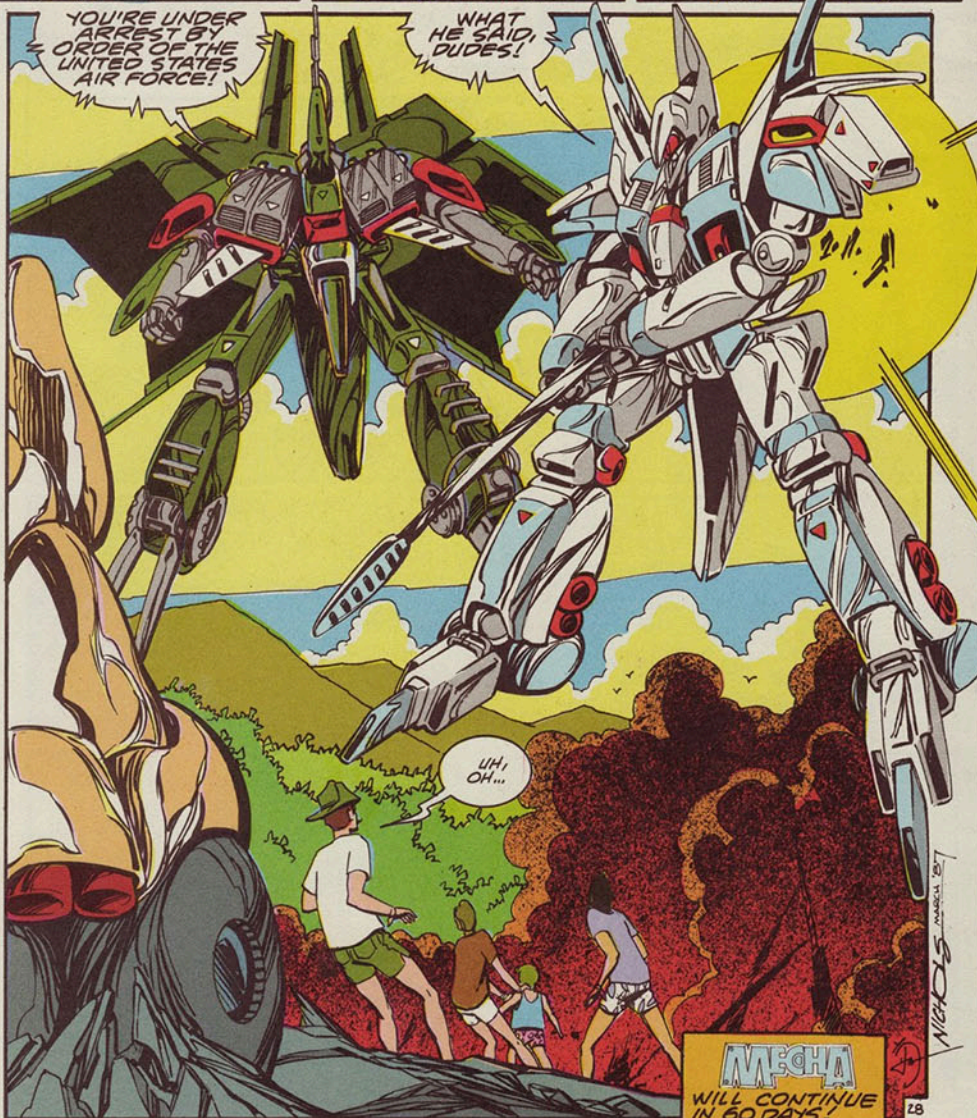


TOO LATE.









MECHA
WILL CONTINUE
IN 60 DAYS!

NICHOLS

Data Sheet

Randy Stradley

Known around the Dark Horse offices as 'The Man With Too Much to Do,' writer/editor Stradley persists in his vain attempts at leading some semblance of a normal human existence on top of writing *Mecha*, *The Mark* and *Godzilla*, and editing the rest of the Dark Horse line. Like a kid left in charge of a candy store, Stradley immediately hogged all the best assignments for himself, and is now paying the price in the form of stress brought on by overwork and deadline pressure. No one feels the least bit sorry for him.

Harrison Fong

Born in Kowloon, China, Harrison grew up watching Japanese television shows (translated to Cantonese) and drawing his favorite characters (Ultraman in particular) from those shows. Eleven years ago his family moved to the U.S. and Fong was introduced to American comics for the first time. His influences since that time have been Neal Adams, Howard Chaykin and John Byrne, but he hasn't forgotten his first love -- Japanese animation. Fong's busy schedule has him animating commercials and other projects for Colossal Studios, taking classes at the San Francisco School of Art, and pencilling *Robotech Masters* for Comico as well as designing and pencilling *Mecha*. Expect great things from him in the future.

Art Nichols

'Honor' is the word most often associated with Nichols' name. Positive and upbeat, you can always count on Nichols to do what he says he'll do -- when

he says he'll do it. His not inconsiderable abilities have already graced a multitude of books at Marvel and DC, including *Spider-Man*, *Conan* and the *Demon* mini-series. He's the one who adds the textures and details to Fong's slick, animation-style pencils. Besides turning out some of the best links in the business, pencilling *Dark Horse Presents* "Vitruvian Man" and babysitting Tony Salmons' cat, Nichols also has a \$200.00 bet with Mark Badger over who can first lose twenty pounds. Our money's on Nichols.

John Workman

The art editor at *Heavy Metal* for a number of years, and a successful artist in his own right, Workman has more recently turned his attention to lettering -- becoming one of the most sought after scribes in the industry. His lettering can currently be seen in DC's *Doom Patrol* and Marvel's *Thor*. Soft-spoken, yet confident, John and his family reside in New Jersey.

Steve Mattsson

The colorist for the covers on *Boris the Bear* (since issue #2), and the soon-to-be-released full-color *Boris the Bear Instant Color Classics*, Mattsson has also scripted several issues of that book, as well as his own series, "The Vitruvian Man" for *Dark Horse Presents*. First attracted to comics by the bright colors and easy to understand pictures, Mattsson has since graduated from college and travelled extensively in Europe.

Next Issue: Data on the Mecha themselves!